The Board convened in the Commissioners' Hearing Room, 6th Floor, Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin Street, Vancouver, Washington. Commissioners Stanton, Pridemore, and Morris, Chair, present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Commissioners conducted the Flag Salute.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Sutphin, 9409 NE 100th Way, Vancouver, and his wife, Jackie, commented on the problem of illegally parked trucks. Mr. Sutphin said they used to live in Lodi, California, which had an acute problem with illegally parked trucks. He provided some background. He said there is a similar situation within the development where they now live. He said the width of the street is 25 feet, and there are two residences at which 18-wheelers park. He said the trailers are 12 feet wide and the tractors are 10 1/5 feet. Sutphin provided some pictures and noted that they had brought this matter to the attention of the City Council of Lodi, California. He said there had been two accidents that resulted in fatalities and something was finally done. All truck parking within the city limits was eliminated, except for the purpose of loading and unloading. Sutphin said he has talked with staff from Clark County Code Enforcement, who in turn have talked with the neighbors regarding the trucks. Sutphin said he was told that the most Code Enforcement could do was to write a letter, which he feels is ineffective. Sutphin then contacted the Sheriff's Office, but he was told that the issue of illegally parked trucks was the lowest priority type of call. Sutphin said he is concerned about loss of life due to pedestrian and vehicle accidents, as well as fire response to the homeowners. Sutphin said the Fire Marshal should be notified and that it should also be more forcefully brought to the attention of the Sheriff's Office. He added that he wished they could get a better response from Code Enforcement.

Morris asked Mr. Sutphin how long it had been since he spoke with Code Enforcement.

Sutphin said it had been about 10 days.

Morris explained that there is a process and the first step is to send out a letter, which takes awhile. Secondly, in regards to towing she said that it's not typical for the county to tow a vehicle on the very first notice. In regards to the Sheriff's Office changing the priority of this problem, she said that Clark County's Sheriff is an independently elected official. She said that in terms of the Fire Marshal issuing safety citations that was a direction they could explore. Morris asked Rich Carson, Director of Community Development, to meet with Mr. Sutphin.

Jackie Sutphin, 9409 NE 100th Way, Vancouver, said her concern is that there is only one entrance into and one exit out of the development. She said it's impossible for a small group

such as they are to have to put up with two big trucks. Mrs. Sutphin added that there are children who play in that street.

Morris said they would do what they can. She asked the Sutphin's to provide a phone number where they could be reached.

Mrs. Sutphin provided a phone number – 892-1586. Mrs. Sutphin talked about a program in Lodi called "The Partner," which is comprised of retired people. These volunteers contact code violators to discuss the problem/issue and if that doesn't work, they report back to the police department. Essentially, they kept things going.

CONSENT AGENDA

There being no public comment, **MOVED** by Pridemore to approve items 1 through 13. Commissioners Morris, Stanton, and Pridemore voted aye. Motion carried. (See Tape 83)

PUBLIC HEARING: TWO PERCENT LODGING TAX

Held a public hearing to consider an amendment to Clark County Code 3.16.010(2) to continue in existence a two percent lodging tax on the sale of or charge made for the furnishing of lodging that is subject to tax under RCW Chapter 82.08, and the granting of any similar license to use real property within Clark County. This tax was scheduled to expire as of April 1, 2004. The amendment will be effective April 1, 2004 and will keep the tax in effect.

Kelly Sills, Policy Assistant, Office of the Board of Commissioners, presented. He said that since adoption of the second 2% tax in 1999, it has been dedicated to supporting a convention and visitors bureau. Sills said it's anticipated that beyond 2004 the tax would instead would be dedicated to the Fairgrounds Master Plan projects, in particular, the Expedition Center. He said the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee has met and discussed this issue and they would like to see a funding source continue in support of the CVB. He stated that they are working to establish a Tourism Promotion Area (TPA), which could provide significant funding for the CVB. He said the TPA is still a work in progress, but indications are positive that it will be successful. In the interim, however, a proposal would be brought before the board to extend the lodging tax funding of the VCB for a limited period while the TPA is established. Sills explained that the second 2% tax automatically terminates on April 1, 2004, and a proposal to establish the second 2% tax indefinitely was brought before the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee on January 14, 2004, and they voted unanimously for the proposal. It was now being brought before the board in the form of an ordinance, which, if approved, would allow for the second 2% tax to continue without interruption for an indefinite period of time, beyond April 1.

Morris described some of the minor changes to the language and asked what kind of difference those changes would make.

Sills responded that it's a direct reflection of the current language in RCW.

Doris Hale, 310 West 11th Street, Vancouver, stated that she is a member of the Clark County and City of Vancouver Lodging Tax Advisory Committee, as well as a board member of the SW Washington Visitors and Convention Bureau. She talked about concerns expressed at the last Lodging Tax Advisory Committee meeting in January in regards to the continuation of county funding to the VCB. She said it was strongly recommended by the Committee to continue the county's funding until the proposed TPA went into effect. Ms. Hale stressed that the county is going to need a VCB to market the Fairgrounds, the proposed Expo Center, and Amphitheater. She said they need to continue to build on what has already been accomplished. She said she wants to know where the entire 4% lodging tax will be redirected, the impacts to the CVB, and what the county's transition plan is going to be. Hale asked the board to approve the proposed amendment.

Dyann Hamilton, 2985 South Cornett Drive, Ridgefield, stated that she was the Board Secretary for the Clark County Historical Museum. Ms. Hamilton referenced a letter that was sent from the Board of County Commissioners in regards to considering a proposal to dedicate the funds entirely to the [Fairgrounds] Master Plan projects, and Visitors and Convention Bureau. Hamilton said they have been awarded those funds in the past and they just printed their brochure for the museum with the money from this program. She said this is a perfect source for funding for their museum and continued consideration for their organization is necessary. She asked for consideration in regards to ongoing contributions to the museum.

Stanton wanted to clarify that the county currently has in its regular budget an ongoing commitment to the Clark County Historical Museum in the amount of \$25,000. It does not come out of the Lodging funds, but what Hamilton is referring to is a grant that they received for funding marketing materials.

Hamilton said that was correct. She said their current budget is approximately \$130,000 and they really need \$250,000 to offset some of the program expenses. That's why they feel it's so important – and they are so grateful – for the grant funding. She said they are hoping to have continued support every year.

Stanton asked if the funding would just be for marketing purposes.

Hamilton said it would be for marketing, as well as basic general funding.

Stanton said the grant program specifically states that it's not for administrative costs. She said the hotel tax cannot be used for paying for infrastructure, so they can't contribute to the physical structure, but just to the marketing piece.

Morris said it is a competitive grant and would be prudent for the museum not to count on it on a continuous basis.

Hamilton said they do realize that. She said the whole intention is that if the additional 2% is approved, that there be consideration to those types of grants versus entirely allocating funding to the Fairgrounds Master Plan.

Alene Woodage, P.O. Box 264, Ridgefield, stated that she has been a community activist for many years and currently sits on the Board of The Friends of the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. Ms. Woodage said they received a grant in 2002 for marketing of the Birdfest, but she was sure those grants were also received by other small communities and she stressed how important those monies are in helping organizations do marketing. She provided an example of how the tax and lodging money has helped the Birdfest. Woodage presented further background information regarding her organization and how the grant money has helped them.

Morris asked Ms. Woodage what the amount was for the 2002 grant.

Woodage said it was \$7,000.

Morris asked how the money was used.

Woodage replied that they used it for marketing, such as flyers and brochures.

Morris wanted to clarify that the decision they are making is whether or not to collect the hotel/motel tax. She added that they do appreciate the comments.

Stanton further clarified that what they have are two 2% lodging taxes – the one that's been in existence since the 1970's, and the one they adopted in the late 1990's. She said the one from the 1990's is the one that required the Advisory Committee earlier referenced by Ms. Hale. She said the resolution they passed when they adopted the second 2% specifically committed the second 2% fully to fund a Visitors and Convention Bureau, which was new. She explained that the Advisory Committee had recommended that since the second 2% was entirely committed to the VCB for a period of five years in order to get them up and running, that the first 2% was where the grant program started. She said that today the board is considering the second 2% because it has reached the sunset point. So, today they are considering whether to extend it.

Sills interjected that the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee had recommended that it be dedicated to the Fairgrounds Master Plan Project.

Stanton commented that she would like to ask Ms. Hale if she understood the outcome from the Advisory Committee differently than she, herself, did and whether Ms. Hale questioned the minutes.

Hale said when she was at the meeting she got the impression that the county had already promised the full funding of the lodging tax monies to enable them to do something with bonding for the expo center and the Fairgrounds. She said it had sounded like it was pretty much decided before their meeting had even taken place. Hale said that when she mentioned that it wasn't a sure thing that the TPA was going to go into effect, there was a lot of discussion at their meeting amongst the hotel managers. They didn't know if they were going to be able to make a go of it or not. She further explained. She said that in regards to the second 2%, she had just felt that it had already been decided that it was promised, and she mentioned that they wanted that money to be continued to the VCB until they know about the outcome of the TPA. She said at the end of the meeting, she thought she recalled Commissioner Stanton saying that perhaps they could get some money from the general fund to help out the VCB until such time.

Stanton said her recollection was that the Committee decided there was a vote on extending the second 2% and the vote was to recommend to the board that it go for the construction projects at the Fairgrounds. She said there was a second recommendation that came from the Committee, which was that they not drop funding to the VCB until it had another funding source.

Hale said that was correct. She wanted to encourage the board to continue that support.

Morris said at this point in time, they have not made any formal decision about how they were going to spend it. However, when they calculate how they're going to be able to pay for those buildings at the Fairgrounds to go back up, they are calculating the lodging tax into those figures. She said it's one of those times in which the Board of County Commissioners desperately struggled with restrained resources. The general fund has no move room and is again threatened by more initiatives. She said it's a very difficult circumstance. She again clarified that the decision before them today is whether or not to continue the second 2%; they aren't making any decisions about how they would be using it.

Hale asked when that decision will be made.

Bill Barron, Clark County Administrator, said he believed the Treasurer was planning on doing the financing in about June 2004.

Jan Sike, 12725 NW 19th Loop, Vancouver, said she was also on the Committee. She said that over the last three years the monies made available from the many grants has been consistently diminishing, and the number of people applying for grants has increased. Also, the requirements of how they are allowed to distribute the monies have become more restrictive. She said that when they were discussing what to do in the future with the amount of awards and number of grants going down, they felt that the money spent in the 2% would be best spent on the Fairgrounds – that's how they voted at that time.

Kim Bennett, President, Southwest Washington Visitors and Convention Bureau, 101 East 8th Street, Suite 110, Vancouver, said the Bureau wanted to go on record to say that they do support the reestablishment of the second 2% lodging tax. Ms. Bennett said the VCB recognizes that supporting the revenue stream is a vital tool for economic development through tourism in Clark County through both marketing and capital projects that the county owns, such as the exhibition hall at the Fairgrounds. She said they would ask that when the funds are reallocated, they consider making provisions for continued funding of the CVB if the TPA is either not established or in the interim period of transition between April 1 and several months later when they are optimistic that the TPA may be implemented.

Stanton asked what the CVB market the events in the community that have been receiving grants out of the hotel/motel tax, such as Birdfest or the Fourth of July Rodeo, etc.

Bennett said there are a lot of priorities in the community for tourism, but there is just not enough money to go around. She said the CVB sets priorities and focuses primarily on the group market, both through conferences and group tour; however, for those other events that they want to promote, such as Birdfest, they hope that the CVB has been a part of them generating the numbers that they have. Bennett further explained. She said that last year they had 56 publications that ran stories on Vancouver and Clark County. She said they also feature the Birdfest, and events such as that, in the visitor's guide and last year they distributed over 50,000 visitor guides. Also, the Birdfest was featured in an attraction brochure, which was distributed throughout Oregon, Washington, and parts of Idaho.

Stanton said that when the CVB was first formed one of the discussions they had was that it was important to have three legs to the stool – funding from the City, the County, and the industry/private members. Stanton asked what the percentage of the CVB's budget is funded through private membership.

Bennett said they have approximately 75 members and she estimated that 10% was private.

Michael Kissinger, P.O. Box 118, Vancouver, representative of the Bravo! Vancouver, and Vancouver Wine and Jazz Festival, which is a non-profit concert series, spoke in support of continued funding of the Visitors and Convention Bureau and stated that it's critically important

to have a viable VCB. With regard to lodging tax and what is has meant in terms of marketing and promotion, Kissinger said they couldn't have built the Wine and Jazz Festival into the organization it is without it. He further explained.

MOVED by Stanton to approve Ordinance 2004-03-09. Commissioners Morris, Stanton, and Pridemore voted aye. Motion carried. (See Tape 84)

2 p.m. Bid Opening

Present at the Bid Opening:

Mike Westerman and Priscilla Ricci, General Services; and Louise Richards, Clerk of the Board

BID OPENING 2357

Held a public hearing for Bid Opening 2357 – One Button Bituminous Melter. Mike Westerman, General Services, opened and read bids. Westerman said it was their intention to award Bid 2357 on March 16, 2004, at 10:00 a.m., in the Commissioners' hearing room of the Clark County Public Service Center, 6th Floor. (See Tape 84)

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Betty Sue Morris/s/
Betty Sue Morris, Chair

Judie Stanton/s/
Judie Stanton, Commissioner

Craig A. Pridemore, Commissioner

ATTEST:

Rebecca Tilton/s/

Deputy Clerk of the Board

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